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THE PONY EXPRESS

IN NEVADA

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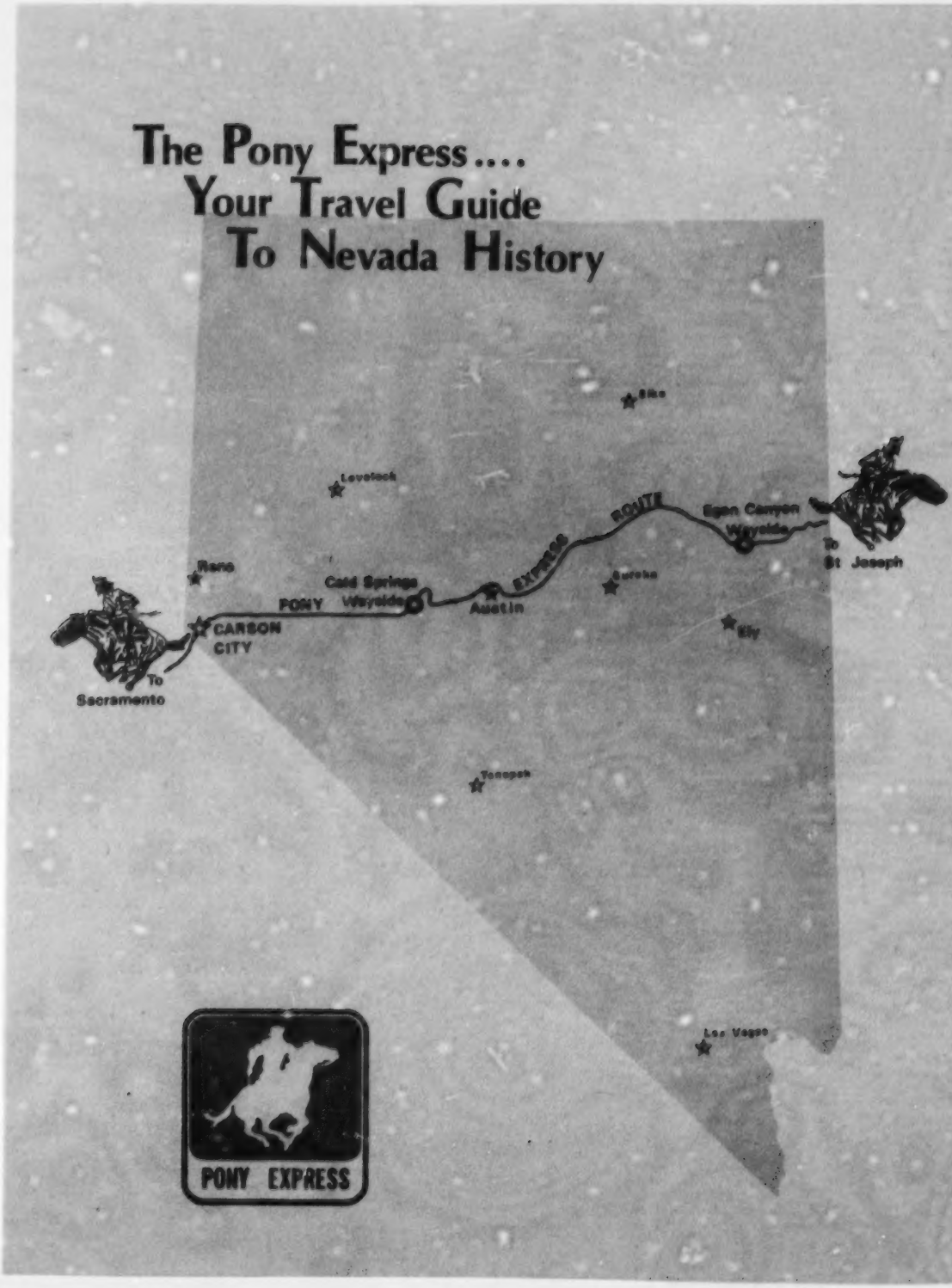
The Pony Express.... Your Travel Guide To Nevada History



Take a trip with us
on the Pony Express....
Back more than 100 years
to Nevada as it was then.

INSIDE....

The 'Pony'
The Men
Pony Bob
Sir Richard Burton
The Stations
The Lone Tree Legend
Uncle Nick
Cold Springs Wayside
Egan Canyon Wayside
Mini~trips....
Genoa to Ft. Churchill
Sulphur Springs to Ruby Valley
Ruby Valley to Egan Canyon

READEX FICHE

THE "PONY"

Photo courtesy of Pony Express Museum, St. Joseph, Mo.

Competing with time, distance, harsh climate, and caught between battling soldiers and Indians, the Pony Express carried important communications 2,000 miles from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California, in 10 days. The "Pony," as it was called, is an outstanding example of American courage, endurance, and determination in the westward expansion of the nation.

The Pony made its first historic run on April 3, 1860, and despite its long-lived reputation, it lasted only 18 months, until October 1861. Its founders were W. H. Russell, Alexander Majors, and William B. Waddell, operators of the Overland Stage Line of Leavenworth, Kansas, a daily coach from the Missouri River to Salt Lake City.

The idea for such a daring operation, however, came from Senator William Gwin of California. In the winter of 1859, Russell, while in Washington, D.C., became acquainted with the Senator. Gwin was very interested in faster mail service between the East and California. Knowing Russell was engaged in a related business, Gwin urged him to consider establishing such a mail service.

Russell liked the idea and returned to Leavenworth to consult with his partners. Being practical businessmen, Majors and Waddell said the expense would be greater than the profits and tried to discourage Russell. He, however, said he had made a commitment to Senator Gwin and told his partners they must support him in the effort. Despite their better judgment, they did, and work began on the Pony Express.

The firm had already established stagecoach stations every 10 or 12 miles as far as Salt Lake City. Beyond that, new stations in remote, hostile territory had to be built. Riders and fast horses also had to be found, but despite all this, in less than two months after the three partners promised Senator Gwin they would do the job, the first express was ready to leave Sacramento and St. Joseph, simultanously.

To handle the operation, four able division agents were selected: A.E. Lewis at St. Joseph, Joseph A. Slade at Julesburg, Howard Egan at Salt Lake City, and Bolivar Roberts at Carson City.

In a short time, these men managed to find 80 experienced riders, 500 horses, and build some of the 190 stations needed for the Pony Express.

Many of the riders were skillful guides or seasoned scouts. All were, by necessity, good horsemen. They were noted for their small, wiry statures. For risking their lives daily, they received $25 per week, two revolvers, a rifle, a bowie knife, and a gold-imprinted Bible. Later on, the heavy armaments proved to be too much luggage for the riders, and they finally settled on a single pistol with an extra loaded cylinder.

The ponies were also carefully selected. They had to be well-broken, sound animals. Most were half-breed California mustangs, quick and full of endurance.

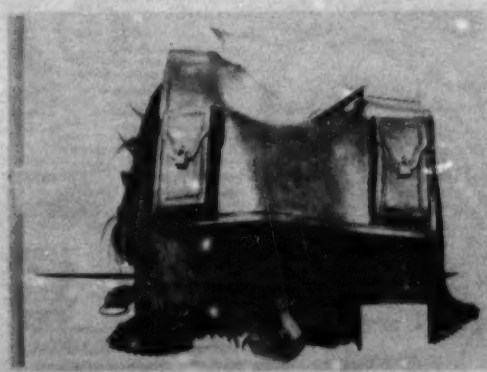


Photo courtesy of Pony Express Museum

Over the saddle of these horses was placed the basic equipment of the Pony Express — a well tailored leather vest, or mochila, containing the mail. Designed for its lightness and ability to be quickly transferred from horse to horse, the mochila had four stiff leather cantinas, or boxes, sewn to it to carry the mail. Openings in the front of the mochila allowed it to fit snugly over the saddle, yet when a rider came into a station he had only to jerk free the mochila, throw it on another saddled fresh horse, and he was on his way.

To insure the privacy of the mails, the four pockets containing the letters, wrapped in oiled silk for protection, were locked from St. Joseph to Sacramento.

The Pony Express was a fast, efficient organization, but even with its high prices (averaging $1 to $5 an ounce and sometimes totaling $1,000 in receipts for a single day) it failed completely as a financial venture. As Majors and Waddell predicted, expenses far surpassed receipts. The Pony is credited with helping keep California in the Union at the outbreak of the Civil War, but despite this contribution, it never received any financial assistance or subsidy from Congress.

But finances were only part of the Pony's demise. While the Pony's riders were setting speed records carrying communications between East and West, construction was underway on a communication system they could never beat—the transcontinental telegraph. When it was completed on October 24, 1861, it solved the need for urgent communication that had created the Pony Express.

A message that had taken 10 days by Pony mail could be transmitted by telegraph in 10 seconds. So, four days later, on October 28, the Pony Express, and with it, a colorful era of western history, was at an end.

To commemorate the Pony's history, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in three states, Utah, Wyoming, and Nevada, has marked the original route for travelers. In Nevada, this includes a 420-mile stretch from Lake Tahoe to the Goshute Indian Reservation on the Utah border.

Through public funding, the BLM has placed sturdy concrete markers across Nevada at all land ownership boundaries and on mountain passes. Wooden signs mark important road intersections and posts branded with "XP" (the Pony Express horses' brand) dot the route at mile intervals.

CENTRAL OVERLAND CALIFORNIA
AND
PIKE'S PEAK EXPRESS CO.

PONY
EXPRESS!
FROM SAINT JOSEPH, MO.,
TO
SAN FRANCISCO
IN TEN DAYS!
(FIFTEEN DAYS DURING WINTER.)

Passes through, and takes Letters to the following points:
Fort Kearney,
Fort Laramie,
Fort Bridger,
Great Salt Lake City,
Camp Floyd,
Virginia City,
Carson City,
Placerville
and Sacramento City.

CHARGES.

Letters not exceeding ½ oz. $5 00
" over ½ oz. and not exceeding ½ oz. 1 00
and so on, always to be pre-paid.

AGENTS.

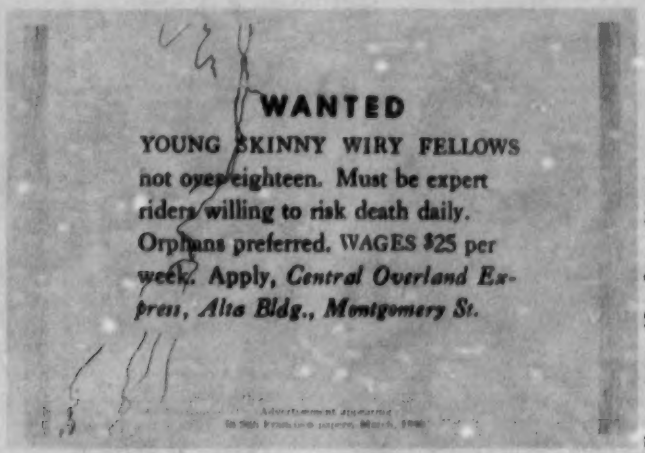
J. B. Simpson, New York; Cobb, Gardner & Co., Boston; W. H. Worder, Chicago; Samuel S. Allen, St. Louis; J. P. Caldwell, Washington City.

St. Joseph Office at Patee House.

Photo courtesy of Pony Express Museum

In addition, two wayside displays, one at Cold Springs in Churchill County and the other at Egan Canyon in White Pine County, have been constructed. These waysides, located near original station sites, contain information about Pony Express history and artists' conceptions of people, places, and events.

THE MEN



WANTED

YOUNG SKINNY WIRY FELLOWS not over eighteen. Must be expert riders willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred. WAGES $25 per week. Apply, *Central Overland Express, Alta Bldg., Montgomery St.*

Photo courtesy of Pony Express Museum

The men of the Pony Express, or the "Pony" as it was called, came from a variety of backgrounds, areas, and age groups. One thing they had in common was a love for the rowdy West and a desire for excitement.

They basically fell into three categories: the riders (by far the most famous), the stationmasters, and the division agents. All played a vital role in shaping the history of the Pony Express and through it, an exciting part of western history.

Since the goal of the Pony was speed, riders were small and wiry; many were just teenagers. One of the youngest riders in Nevada was Billy Tate, 14, who rode between Carson City and Camp Ruby. Billy was not destined to grow any older. On this last run, he was waylaid by a war party of about a dozen Bannocks and Utes. Turning loose his pony, with Indian arrows in its hide, to warn the next station, Billy hid behind a huge boulder and prepared to fight the Indians and defend the mail.

When the nearby stationmasters came to look for him, they found seven dead Indians and Billy's arrow-riddled body. Standing there, one of the men commented, "They respected courage, even in a fallen foe. They didn't touch the mochila (containing the mail). They didn't even take his scalp." (Source: *Phantom Riders of the Pony Express*, by William H. Floyd).

Photo courtesy of National Archives

Death and danger were very much a part of a rider's life. In Nevada, because of the scarcity of water and settlements, each rider changed horses three times, covering about 90 miles. Many could cover as much as 15 miles an hour across some of the most desolate, dangerous, and rough country in the West.

Before being hired, however, each man was required to take the following oath:

"I_____, do hereby swear, before the great and Living God, that during my engagement, and while I am an employee of Russell, Majors and Waddell, I will, under no circumstances, use profane language; that I will drink no intoxicating liquors; that I will not quarrel or fight with any other employee of the firm, and that in every respect I will conduct myself honestly, be faithful to my duties, and so direct all my acts as to win the confidence of my employers. So help me God."

The Pony Express rider's life was exciting and dangerous. But it was also very lonely. As one western writer described it,

"Darting between these relay stations, the Pony Express rider had little opportunity to form friendships among the men who were always on hand to speed him on his way. A distant figure in the sagebrush, a blast from a horn to announce his coming, and the rider was at the station. A fresh horse, prancing, excited and eager to go; the quick change of the mail from one saddle to the other; a foot in the stirrup and the rider was gone, with hardly more than time to exchange a few words with the lean, sunburnt men who would be there, with ready hands and swift counsel, on his return trip. Brief advice from the station attendants: 'Look out for this black today—he's shore on the prod;' or 'The crick's up a foot—better hit the ford a little high'; or perhaps, 'What's the latest from Pike and the rest of the states?'" (Source: *The Pony Express, the record of a romantic adventure in business*, by Arthur Chapman.)

But if the riders were lonely and in danger, so were the stationmasters and attendants. Braving the elements, these men had to make sure a fresh horse was always ready for the next rider, while watching for Indians all along the 420 miles through Nevada.

Conditions were primitive, water and building materials were scarce, and many stations didn't even have roofs. These were bad times for Nevada, then part of the Utah Territory. There were many serious conflicts between the white settlers and bands of Indians. Sometimes the stations were caught in the middle and the stationmaster lost his life.

Photo courtesy of Pony Express Museum

Holding these stations and men together were the division agents or superintendents. In Nevada, there were two—Bolivar Roberts, who was in charge of the route between Carson City and Roberts' Station in present-day Eureka County, and Howard Egan, who handled the portion between Robert's Station and Salt Lake City.

"Such men were on the trail most of the time, meeting and disposing of emergencies as they arose. It was 'up to' the division superintendent to see that the livestock was kept in good condition; to apprehend horse thieves; to keep stations supplied when no supplies were in sight; to see that substitutes were available when riders were sick or injured, or had suddenly quit the service; and to build anew on the ruins of stations that had been destroyed by Indians . . . .

"All the way from Kearney to Carson each superintendent, on his allotted part of the 'Pony' trail, was general, judge and jury." (Source: *The Pony Express, the record of a romantic adventure in business*, by Arthur Chapman.)

PONY BOB — The Longest Ride

One of the best known Pony Express riders in Nevada was Robert Haslam, better known at "Pony Bob." Part of Bob's fame came from his ride in May, 1860, at the peak of Nevada's Indian troubles. It was the longest ride of the Pony Express—380 miles—and almost right on schedule.

Bob described his experience to author William Lightfoot Visscher:

"When I reached Reed's Station, on the Carson River, I found no change of horses, as all those at the station had been seized by the whites to take part in the approaching battle. I fed the animal that I rode, and started for the next station, called Buckland's . . . fifteen miles farther down the river (southwest of present-day Lahontan Reservoir). It was to have been the termination of my journey, as I had changed my old route to this one, in which I had many narrow escapes, and had been twice wounded by Indians.

"I had already ridden seventy-five miles (from Friday's Station, south of Lake Tahoe); but to my great astonishment, the other rider refused to go on. The superintendent, W.C. Marley, was at the station, but all his persuasion could not prevail on the rider, Johnson Richardson, to take the road. Turning then to me, Marley said:

"Bob, I will give you $50 if you will make this ride.'

"I replied, 'I will go at once.'

"Within ten minutes, when I had adjusted my Spencer rifle, which was a seven-shooter and my Colt's revolver, with two cylinders ready for use in case of emergency, I started. From the station onward it was a lonely and dangerous ride of thirty-five miles, without a change, to the Sink of the Carson. I arrived there all right, however, and pushed on to Sand Springs, through an alkali bottom and sand hills, thirty miles farther, without a drop of water all along the route. At Sand Springs I changed horses and continued on to Cold Springs, a distance of thirty-seven miles. Another change and a ride of thirty more miles brought me to Smith's Creek. Here I was relieved by J.G. Kelly. I had ridden 190 miles, stopping only to eat and change horses."

Photo courtesy of Pony Express Museum

Statue at Pony Express Museum, St. Joseph, Mo.

This was the fastest ride made on the entire 2,000-mile route during the Pony Express' history.

"After remaining at Smith's Creek about nine hours, I started to retrace my journey with the return express. When I arrived at Cold Springs to my horror I found that the station had been attacked by Indians, the keeper killed, and all the horses taken away. I decided in a moment what course to pursue—I would go on. I watered my horse, having ridden him thirty miles on time, he was pretty tired, and started for Sand Springs, thirty-seven miles away. It was growing dark, and my road lay through heavy sage brush, high enough in some places to conceal a horse. I kept a bright lookout, and closely watched every motion of my poor pony's ears, which is a signal for danger in an Indian country. I was prepared for a fight, but the stillness of the night and the howling of the wolves and coyotes made cold chills run through me at times; but I reached Sand Springs in safety and reported what had

happened. Before leaving, I advised the station keeper to come with me to the Sink of the Carson, for I was sure the Indians would be upon him the next day. He took my advice, and so probably saved his life, for the following morning Smith's Creek was attacked.

"When I arrived at the Sink of the Carson, I found the station men badly frightened, for they had seen some fifty warriors decked out in their war-paint and reconnoitering . . . . I rested here an hour, and after dark started to Buckland's, where I arrived without mishap and only three and a half hours behind schedule time. I found Mr. Marley at Buckland's, and when I related to him the story of the Cold Springs tragedy and my success, he raised his previous offer of $50.00 for my ride to $100.00. I was rather tired, but the excitement of the trip had braced me up to withstand the fatigue of the journey. After a rest of one and a half hours, I proceeded over my own route from Buckland's to Friday's Station, crossing the Sierra Nevada. I had traveled 380 miles within a few hours of schedule time, and was surrounded by perils on every hand." (Source: *A thrilling and truthful history of the Pony Express*, by William Lightfoot Visscher.)

Schools and civic groups in Nevada are invited to use a film about Pony Bob called *The Record Ride for the Pony Express,* available at the BLM's Reno office.

SIR RICHARD BURTON An Eyewitness

Seldom can a first-hand, continuing account of an era be found. When such a historical description exists, especially if written by a keen observer, it is an invaluable source of information.

Such an account exists of the Pony Express in Nevada. The writer is Sir Richard Burton, a noted British scholar and explorer. The work is a book describing his travels to Salt Lake City and across the West in 1860, entitled *The City of the Saints, and Across the Rocky Mountains to California.*

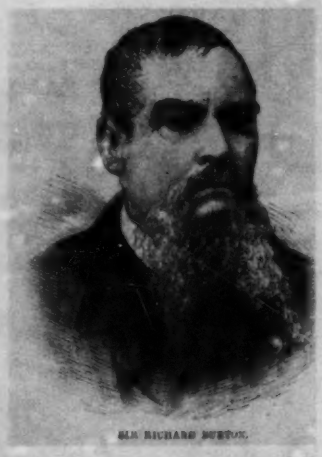
The year 1860 was a low point in Burton's distinguished career. Although he had been the first white man to explore Somaliland, one of the first white men to enter the Moslem holy city of Mecca, and the discoverer of Lake Tanganyika while searching for the source of the Nile, his accomplishments were not given proper credit in the British scientific community. The final blow occurred when the British Geographic Society chose someone else to head another expedition to find the source of the Nile. Burton quietly left England on a nine-month journey through America.

He was drawn to the American West by his interest in the cultures of the American Indian and the Mormons. But it was polygamy among the Mormons that fascinated him most. He had already studied the practice extensively in Africa and the Near East and was anxious to learn about it in this new, curious culture. He traveled by stagecoach from St. Joseph, Missouri and arrived in Salt Lake City in August, 1860, staying there three weeks to study the Mormon society.

But it was the next portion of this trip that is of particular interest to Nevadans. Burton contracted with a muleskinner to take him to California. Because of Indian troubles along the frequently used Humboldt route, they decided to follow the Pony Express route. It is from Burton's well-kept diary of this part of his journey that we get a colorful, eyewitness description of Nevada and the Pony Express in 1860.

Egan Canyon - October 5, 1860:

"We set out at 2 p.m. for Egan's Station, beyond an ill-omened kanyon of the same name . . . . An uglier place for sharpshooting can



SIR RICHARD BURTON.

hardily be imagined. The floor of the kanyon is almost flush with the bases of the hills, and in such formations the bed of the creek which occupies the sole is rough and winding. The road was vile, - now winding along, then crossing the steam, - hedged in with thicket and dotted with boulders. Ahead of us was a rocky projection which appeared to cross our path, and upon this Point Dangerous every eye was fixed.

"Suddenly my eye caught sight of one fire - two fires under the black bunch of firs half-way up the hill-side on our left, and as suddenly they were quenched, probably with snow. Nothing remained but to hear the warwhoop, and to see a line of savages rushing down the rocks. We loosed the doors of the ambulance that we might jump out if necessary and tree ourselves behind it, and knowing that it would be useless to return, drove on at our fastest speed with sleet, snow, and wind in our faces. Under the circumstances, it was cold comfort to find when we had cleared the kanyon that Egan's Station at the further mouth had been reduced to a chimney stack and a few charred posts. The Gosh-Yutas had set fire to it two or three days before our arrival in revenge for the death of seventeen of their men by Lt. Weed's party. We could distinguish the pits from which the wolves had torn up the corpses, and one fellow's arm projected from the snow."

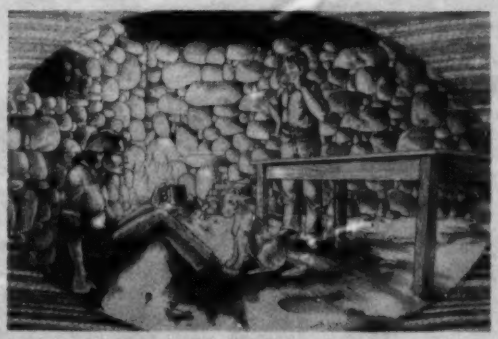
Butte or Robber's Roost - October 6, 1860:

"It is about as civilised as the Galway shanty, or the normal dwelling-place in Central Equatorial Africa. Outside the door - the hingeless and lockless backboard of a wagon bearing the wounds of bullets - and resting on lintels and staples, which also had formed parts of locomotives, a slab acting stepping-stone over a mass of soppy black soil strewed with ashes, gobs of meat offals, and other delicacies.

"The inside reflected the outside. The length was divided by two perpendiculars, the southernmost of which, assisted by a half-way canvass partition, cut the hut into unequal parts. Behind it were the two bunks for four men; standing bedsteads of poles planted in the ground, as in Australia and Unyamwezi, and covered with piles of ragged blankets. The floor, which also frequently represented bedsteads, was rough, uneven earth, neither tamped nor swept, and the fine end of a spring oozing through the western wall kept part of it in a state of eternal mud. A redeeming point was the fire-place, which occupied half of the northern short wall; it might have belonged to Guy of Warwick's great hall; its ingle nooks boasted dimensions which one connects with an idea of hospitality and jollity . . . . There was no sign of Bible, Shakespere, or Milton; a Holywell Street romance or two was the only attempt at literature. An almost invariable figure in these huts is an Indian standing cross-legged at the door, or squatting uncomfortably close to the fire. He derides the whites for their wastefulness, preferring to crouch in parties of three or four over a little bit of fuel, than to sit before a blazing log. These savages act amongst other things, as hunters, bringing home rabbits and birds . . . ."

Cold Springs - October 15, 1860:

"The station was a wretched place half built and wholly unroofed; the four boys, an exceedingly rough set, ate standing, and neither paper nor pencil was known amongst them. Our animals, however, found good water in a rivulet from the neighborhing hills and the promise of a plentiful feed on the morrow, whilst the humans, observing that a 'beef' had been freshly killed, supped upon an excellent steak. The warm wind



was a pleasant contrast to the usual frost, but as it came from the south, all the weather-wise predicted that rain would result. We slept however, without such accident, under the haystack, and heard the loud howling of the wolves, which are said to be larger on these hills than elsewhere."

Sand Springs - October 17, 1860:

"Sand Springs deserved its name . . . the land is cumbered here and there with drifted ridges of the finest sand, sometimes 200 feet high and shifting before every gale. Behind the house stood a mound shaped like the contents of an hour-glass . . . . The water near this vile hole was thick and stale with sulphury salts: it blistered even the hands. The station house was no unfit object in such a scene, roofless and chairless, filthy and squalid, with a smoky fire in one corner, and a table in the centre of an impure floor, the walls open to every wind, and the interior full of dust. Of the *employes*, all loitered and sauntered about *desoeuvre's* as cretins, except one, who lay on the ground crippled and apparently dying by the fall of a horse upon his breast bone."

Buckland's - October 19, 1860:

"We found the station-house, and congratulated ourselves that we had escaped a twelve hours' durance vile in its atmosphere of rum, kornschnapps, stale tobacco, flies, and profane oaths, not to mention the chance of being 'wiped out' in a 'difference' between soldier and a gambler, or a miner and a rider."

The conclusion of Burton's journey took him through Carson City and Sacramento to San Francisco where he caught a boat to take him home.

THE STATIONS

There was little permanence to the Pony Express stations scattered across Nevada, the untouched land known as the Utah Territory.

Historians disagree about the precise number of stations in Nevada, how long they were used for the Pony Express, their origins, and their precise locations. Remnants of some still exist, while others are completely gone. Since the stations often were located close to water, a valuable commodity in Nevada, many are now privately owned; others are on public land and are still accessible.

The inside map shows the locations of Pony Express stations that existed in Nevada.
Following is a brief description of each:

1. Friday's - Located a mile east of Stateline, this station is now on private land. "Friday" Burke and James Small, were granted the franchise to operate the station. The original blacksmith shop still stands.

2. Genoa - The old post office in Genoa was used as the Pony Express station. The site is now a vacant lot just south of the courthouse; the building was razed years ago.

3. Carson City - The old station building is now gone, but its original site is on Carson Street between 4th and 5th Streets, near the original Ormsby House.

4. Dayton - The original station was at the site of Spafford's Hall Station, now a gravel pit. A second Pony station was built on the site of the present Union Hotel. Nothing remains of either.

5. Miller's or Reed's - The site of this station, about 8 miles from Dayton, now is on private land. Nothing remains of the original station.

6. Fort Churchill - The headquarters building of this historic fort was the stopping point for the Pony Express. The fort now is a State Monument located south of Silver Springs.

7. Buckland's - This station was used as the Pony Express stop until Ft. Churchill was built in the summer of 1860. The original log cabin, now gone, was 8.5 miles south of Silver Springs on Highway 95 alternate.

8. Hooten Wells — Located 12 miles east of Highway 95 alternate, this site was used only during the last three months of the Pony Express. Ruins still exist.

9. Carson Sink - Little remains of this once busy station built of adobe in March 1860. Two adobe walls of the corral are still visible, but are rapidly melting into the surrounding alkali flat.

10. Sand Springs — The site of this station is about three-fourths of a mile north of Highway 50 near Sand Mountain. This was one of two stations excavated by University of Nevada, Reno, archaeologists for the BLM. The station is listed on the Nation Register of Historic Places.

11. Cold Springs — The site of many Indian skirmishes, substantial ruins of this station remain. It is 1.5 miles east of Highway 50, about 59 miles east of Fallon. This site was also studied by the University's archaeologists and like Sand Springs, had its walls strengthened and reinforced for visitor safety. It is also on the National Register of Historical Places.

12. Smith's Creek - The original Pony Express site now is on private land about 14 miles north of Highway 2 in the Desatoya Mountains. Ruins still exist.

13. Dry Wells - The exact location of this station is not known, but it is believed to have been located in the Shoshone Range west of Reese River. It was primarily used as an Overland Stage Station, but was probably used by the Pony Express in its final months of operation.

14. Jacob's Spring or Reese River - The Pony Express station at this site, on private land just north of Highway 50, gave birth to a prosperous town called Jacobsville, which declined when nearby Austin was founded.

15. Simpson Park - The station, about 15 miles northeast of Austin on private land, was attacked twice by Indians. Some stone foundations still remain.

16. Dry Creek - Also the site of several skirmishes with Indians, remains of this station are on private land 4 miles north of Highway 50.

17. Grub's Well - There are no original remains of this station, used during the last few months of the Pony Express. The site, 8 miles north of Highway 50, is on private land.

18. Robert's Creek - Several Indian skirmishes occurred at this station, now on private land 15 miles north of Highway 50. No remains of the original log structure exist.

19. Sulphur Springs - Nothing remains of this station, probably used during the last few months of the Pony Express. This site is on private land, slightly north of the Pony route.

20. Diamond Springs - Some remains of this station still are visible from the county road on the west side of the Diamond Mountains. The site is on private land.

21. Jacob's Well - This station, on public land, was used in the latter days of the Pony Express. Located in Huntington Valley, very little is left except scattered remnants of the stone foundation and a caved-in well.

22. Ruby Valley - Nothing remains of the original station at the privately-owned site in Ruby Valley. Remnants of the station have been restored and are on display at the Northern Nevada Museum in Elko. This station is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

23. Mountain Springs — Nothing remains of this station, used in the final months of the Pony Express. The site, in the Maverick Springs Range is on private land.

24. Butte - Once a large complex, now only a few stone foundations remain at this station site, on public land on the east side of Butte Mountains.

25. Egan - Indian skirmishes were common at this station, now on private land. Some stone foundations still exist but are overgrown with brush.

26. Schell Creek - This station, now on private land, was later the site of Fort Schellbourne. No one knows if any of the existing remains of the fort were ever used by the Pony Express.

27. Spring Valley - The exact location of this station is unknown. There are two possible sites, both on private land. This station was primarily used by the Overland Stage, but the Pony Express probably used it during its final months.

28. Antelope Springs - This station was burned by Indians in 1860, but was later rebuilt. The site is now on private land.

29. Prairie Gate - The exact location of this station is not known, but it was probably inside the present Goshute Indian Reservation.

30. Deep Creek - The site of this station, just inside Utah, is near the town of Ibapah.

STATIONS

1. FRIDAY'S
2. GENOA
3. CARSON CITY
4. DAYTON
5. MILLER'S (REED'S)
6. FORT CHURCHILL
7. BUCKLAND'S
8. HOOTEN WELLS
9. CARSON SINK
10. SAND SPRINGS
11. COLD SPRINGS
12. SMITH CREEK
13. DRY WELL
14. JACOB'S SPRING (REESE RIVER)
15. SIMPSON PARK
16. DRY CREEK
17. GRUB'S WELL
18. ROBERT'S CREEK
19. SULPHUR SPRINGS
20. DIAMOND SPRINGS
21. JACOB'S WELL
22. RUBY
23. MOUNTAIN SPRINGS
24. BUTTE
25. EGAN CANYON
26. SCHELL CREEK
27. SPRING VALLEY
28. ANTELOPE SPRINGS
29. EIGHT MILE OR PRAIRIE GATE
30. DEEP CREEK

NEVADA
PONY EXPRESS ROUTE

THE LONE TREE LEGEND

A lone cottonwood tree in the Fallon Valley has been a Pony Express legend since the 1860s. The story's truth has never been proven, but whether truth or legend, the tale typifies the determination of the Pony Express rider to fulfill his oath and protect the mail. One well-known account, published in the *Reno Evening Gazette* in April, 1960, goes like this:

"During the spring and early summer of 1860 the Paiute Indians were on the warpath, and in May the volunteers under Major Ormsby, who went out to punish them, were defeated with many casualties, at Pyramid Lake. Although the uprising was subdued when regulars came to the aid of western Nevada, small bands continued to harry riders and stations to the extent that for a month the Express ceased to run while burned stations were rebuilt and new stock secured. During this period an adobe fort was built at the Sink, and stations at Sand Springs and Cold Springs, along the route, were fortified. When mail operations were resumed around mid-summer 1860, 'Pony Bob' Haslam arrived at the old Buckland's station, ending his run from Placerville. In his mochila were important government papers. He tossed his pouch to Emmet McCain, rider from Churchill to Sand Springs, and the latter was off on the trail, warned to watch sharply for Indians, and to guard the important papers at any cost.

"McCain made the usual good time of nine or ten miles an hour to Hooten Wells (sometimes called 'Hooting Wells'). Here two men came out to meet him, the station master in charge and the man from Sink Station, his next relay. The excited men greeted him with the news that Indians had run off all stock at the Sink, the station master barely escaping with his life. That meant no fresh pony at the next stop. A hurried conference took place and it was decided that McCain should take not the swiftest, but the strongest, horse from Hooten Wells, and instead of following the trail around the curve of the hills, he should cut straight toward Sand Springs, thus missing the Sink Station and possibly the Indian raiders.

"Galloping off on the hastily planned route, McCain made fast time; but when about a third of the way had been covered, his horse pricked up his ears and shied nervously. Looking to his right toward the raided station the rider saw that he was about to be defeated in his purpose—a band of Indians were heading across his trail! Putting spurs to his brave pony in a desperate attempt to outdistance them, he raced on. But when he saw that they steadily gained, he determined to save the mail if not himself. Dropping his pouch in a marshy hole in the slough and trampling the spot over with his horse's hooves, the courageous boy thrust the cottonwood switch he was carrying as a whip into the ground as a marker, trusting that thus a comrade might find the mail. Racing on he was soon overtaken and although he used his revolver effectively against the enemy, he was overcome in the end. The cottonwood switch, according to legend, grew into the beautiful tree that for over eighty years stood out upon the plain, a monument to the faithful Pony Express rider." (Source: Newspaper story published in the *Reno Evening Gazette*, April 4, 1960, by Myrtle T. Myles. The author got her information from C. E. Bartlett, who bought the Lone Tree Ranch in 1907. The tale was told to him by Lem Allen, a pioneer who came to the valley in 1863.)

The "lone tree" of the legend was five miles south of Fallon and a mile west, at the intersection of Lone Tree Road and Allen Road. The tree, located on private property, was cut down in the 1930's for safety reasons. down in the 1930s for safety reasons.

During most of its 80 years, it was a "lone" tree, since cottonwoods, usually located near water sources, were rare in the area. Today, there are many cottonwood trees in the vicinity owing to the Newlands Irrigation Project.

UNCLE NICK

Another exciting episode of the Pony Express is the story of Elijah Nichols Wilson, a seasoned rider known as "Uncle Nick." The incident was at Spring Valley Station, northeast of the present-day Humboldt National Forest in White Pine County. The following account is Uncle Nick's:

"I paid my share of it in full one day out there near Spring Valley station in Nevada. Two boys, whose father and mother had died of cholera on the plains, were then tending that station. An old man who should have been in charge, had gotten scared of Injuns and deserted these youngsters; but they stayed at the post like young heroes. When I dashed up there one day, they asked me to have a bite of dinner with them, so I stopped a little while to get the lay of the situation. Jerking off the mochila and the saddle, I turned out my pony, but instead of going into the stable as usual, he trotted off to where some other horses were grazing.

Uncle Nick at 59

Photo courtesy of Pony Express Museum

"A few minutes later we looked to see the horses going across the meadow with two Indians behind them. We dashed after them. I was firing my revolver as I ran, but the shots fell short. The Indians reached the cedar trees before we could. I had outdistanced the boys, and was running on in hope of getting a better shot at the thieves, when just as I was rounding a big cedar tree one of the devils let fly an arrow which caught me right in the head about two inches above the left eye. As I tumbled over, the Indians ran on with the horses, leaving me with the two boys. They tried bravely to help me, pulling at the flint-headed shaft until it came out, leaving the flint in my forehead.

"Feeling sure I would die, they rolled me under the shade of the cedar tree, and ran as fast as they could to the next station for help. Next morning some men were there to bury me, but finding me alive they put off the funeral. I was carried to the station, and a doctor was brought from Ruby Valley. All he did was to get the flint out of my head and leave me there in care of the boys; he had no hope that I would recover. When Major Egan came along some days later and found me still breathing, he sent that doctor back again with orders to do something. I had been unconscious all the while; but after a time I was brought back to my senses and then I began to get better fast. In a few weeks I was riding the Pony Express again; but I have had terrible headaches at different times all my life from the wound made by the flint-headed arrow." (Source: *The Pony Express Goes Through*, by Howard R. Driggs.)

COLD SPRINGS WAYSIDE

To commemorate the western expansion theme of the 1976 Bicentennial, Congress appropriated funds for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to build the Cold Springs Wayside, 60 miles east of Fallon on Highway 50. Built near the original Cold Springs Pony Express Station, the wayside contains information about Pony Express history and artists' conceptions of people, places, and events.

Cold Springs Station was built in March, 1860, by division agent Bolivar Roberts, J.G. Kelly, and others. It was used as a stop when the Pony Express first began in early April.

Of all the stations in Nevada, Cold Springs is probably the best preserved. A substantial rock fortress still stands. Rock ruins measuring 110 feet by 50 feet, with walls four to six feet high and up to three feet thick, still remain. It is basically a four-room structure, consisting of a storage area, barn, corral, and living quarters. The horse corral is adjacent to the living quarters. This was a safety measure to guard the valuable animals, but was also functional so the men could take full advantage of the horses' body heat during the cold Nevada winters. The only other source of heat was from one small fireplace in the living quarters. Gun portals along the walls are still visible.

The Cold Springs Station was attacked several times by Indians. On his famous ride (the longest in Pony Express history) Pony Bob Haslam found the station had been attacked and burned by Indians, the stationmaster killed, and all the horses stolen.

A few weeks after Bob's ride, road agent W.W. Finney received the following message from employee C.H. Ruffin on May 31, 1860:

"I have just returned from Cold Springs—was driven out by the Indians, who attacked us night before last. The men at Dry Creek Station have been killed, and it is thought the Robert's Creek Station has been destroyed. The Express turned back after hearing the news from Dry Creek. Eight animals were stolen from Cold Springs on Monday. Hamilton is at the Sink of the Carson, on his way in with all the men and horses. He will get to Buckland tomorrow." (Source: *The Pony Express, the record of a romantic adventure in business*, by Arthur Chapman.)

This Pony Express station, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, has been identified for your enjoyment. When exploring Cold Springs, be careful, and please do not damage or remove any of these historic ruins.

EGAN CANYON WAYSIDE

A Congressional appropriation was also received to construct the Egan Canyon Wayside, 39 miles north of Ely on Highway 93. Built near the original Egan Pony Express Station, the wayside contains information about Pony Express history and artists' conceptions of people, places and events.

Egan Canyon was the site of several exciting episodes in Pony Express history. The canyon was named for Major Howard Egan, a Mormon who pioneered mail service through the area in the 1850s. When the Pony Express, or the "Pony", as it was called, was established in 1860, Egan was the obvious choice to serve as division agent for the route between Salt Lake City and Robert's Creek in Eureka County. It was Egan's job to build the necessary stations along his portion of the trail. In a meadow at the west end of Egan Canyon near the Cherry Creek Range, he built the Egan Pony Express Station.

Egan Canyon sat on the boundary between the Goshute and Shoshone tribes, so encounters with Indians were quite common. Egan himself was involved in one rather exciting episode. In his book, *Pioneering the West from 1846 to 1878*, he describes the incident:

"The express rider at Shell Creek was too sick to undertake the ride, and I volunteered to take his place. I started just at dark and made pretty good time, but being careful to not overdo the pony, but give him frequent breathing spells, at which times I would let him go on the walk, and was doing so when I was about in the middle of Egan Canyon, I could see the light of a fire was shining.

"In going very carefully along and keeping a sharp lookout for a sentinel, I reached the point where I could see the (Indian) camp. They were on both sides of the road and about in the center of the bend. Well, I had to make up my mind very quickly as to what I should do. I could not wait long, as their dogs might scent me and give the alarm.

"Well, I soon decided to go straight, so, taking my pistol in my hand, I rode on as close as I dared, then striking in the spurs and giving an awful yell, a few jumps of the pony brought me to about the middle of the camp, when my gun began to talk, though pointed up in the air, and my yells accompanied each shot. I got a glimpse of several Indians who were doing their best to make themselves scarce, not knowing but there might be a large party of whites after them.

"When I made the next turn, I was out in the little valley at the head of Egan Canyon and had two trails that I could take to finish. I chose the shortest but the roughest and got home all right. Three days later I came back through the canyon with a companion. We saw where they had had their camp-fires, and where they had fastened a lariat across the road, but I did not see one that night and don't know how I passed it.

"Later I got it from some friendly Indians that there had been a trap set to catch an express rider for the purpose of seeing what he carried to make him travel so fast."

MINI-TRIP Genoa to Ft. Churchill

The Bureau of Land Management invites you to travel the following mini-trip along the Pony Express route in Nevada. The map opposite gives directions and site identification; the route is clearly marked on the ground with signs and wooden posts.

A great deal has changed over the route since 1860, but with a little imagination, you, too, can capture some of the excitement of the Pony Express.

Length of trip on the trail: 1 day

Distance: 44 miles

Transportation: automobile

Conditions: paved and dirt roads

Route: From Genoa, travel north on Foothill Boulevard and follow the paved road through Jack's Valley to Highway 395. The actual Pony Express route cuts off and heads north before reaching Highway 395, but access is not available. Travel north on Highway 395 to Carson City, then turn east on Highway 50 to Dayton. Again, you are slightly off the actual route, which is north of Highway 50 and comes into Dayton from the northwest. From Dayton travel east on Highway 50 to River Road, turn right, and follow this dirt road to Fort Churchill Historic State Monument. (More detailed maps of the area described are available for a nominal fee at BLM offices throughout Nevada.)

Stations on the trip:

Genoa—The vacant lot just south of the courthouse in Genoa was the site of the Pony Express station and later the telegraph office. The livery stable used by the Pony Express was across the street; today this land is part of the Mormon Station Historic State Monument.

Carson City—The station in Carson City was on Carson Street between 4th and 5th Streets near the original Ormsby House. Nothing remains of the original station house. Carson City was a western division headquarters of the Pony Express.

Dayton—The first Pony Express stop in Dayton was at the site of Spafford Hall's Station, now a gravel pit. The Pony Express stop was later changed to the site now occupied by the Union Hotel.

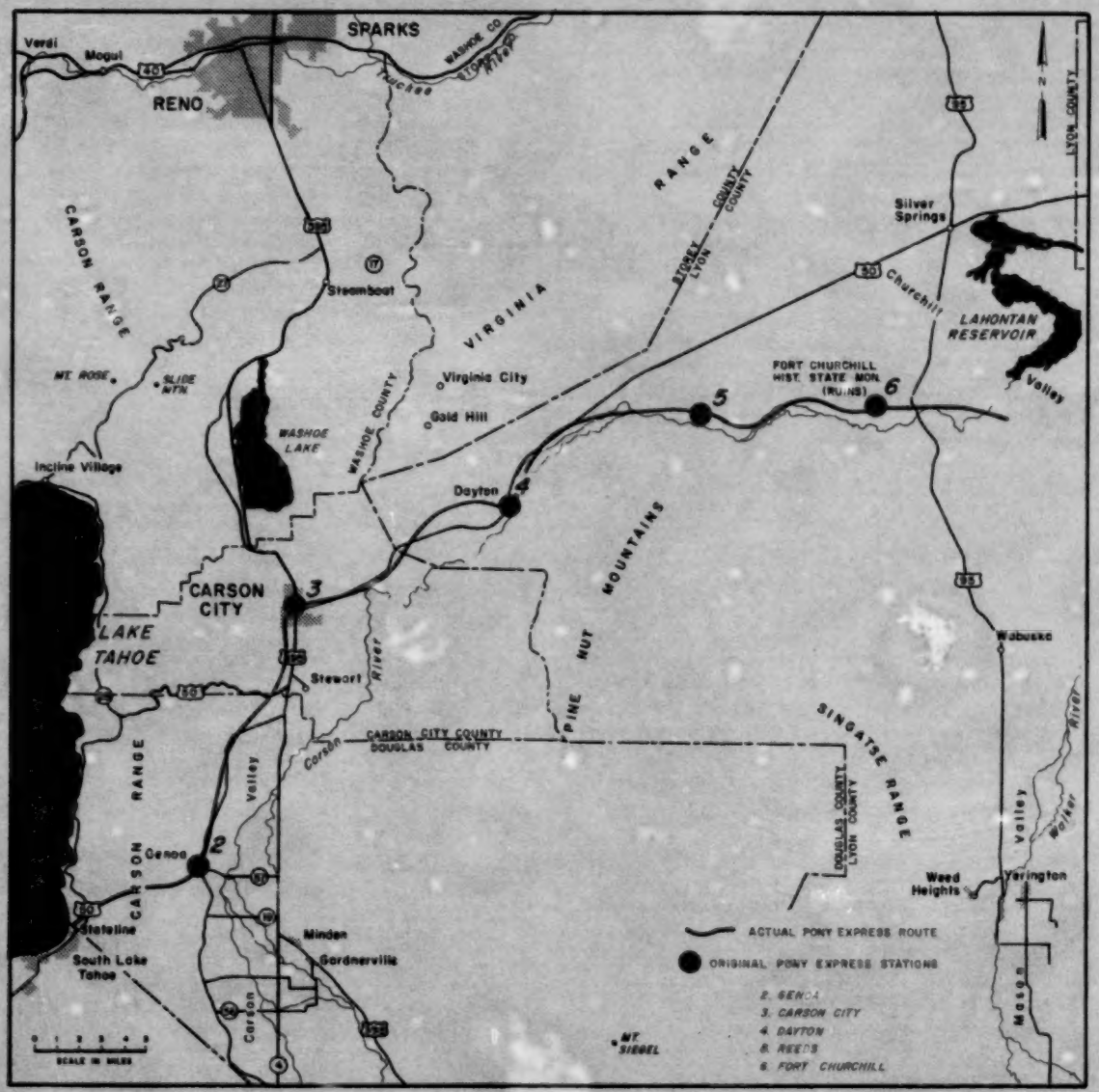
Miller's or Reed's — About eight miles east of Dayton, this station has been destroyed.

Fort Churchill—The headquarters building of this historic fort served as the Pony Express station after July, 1860. It is still standing among the ruins of the fort, now a State Monument.

Points of Interest:

Pony Bob's Ride—The route you just traveled played an important part in the longest ride in Pony Express history—380 miles—and almost right on schedule. The rider was Bob Haslam, known as Pony Bob, whose regular run was from Friday's Station in the Sierra Nevadas to Buckland's, southwest of present-day Lahontan Reservoir. A cowardly relief rider and trouble with Indians forced Bob to continue on to Smith's Creek Station in Lander County, a total of 190 miles. A few hours later, Bob made the return trip, carrying the westbound mail back to Friday's.

Area Museums—For the history buff, there are museums full of western memorabilia in Genoa, Carson City, Dayton, and Fort Churchill.


SPARKS
Verdi
Mogul
RENO
Truckee
WASHOE CO
STOREY COUNTY
RANGE
LYON COUNTY
Silver Springs
Churchill
LAHONTAN RESERVOIR
Valley
CARSON RANGE
Steamboat
VIRGINIA
MT. ROSE
SLIDE MTN.
Virginia City
Gold Hill
WASHOE LAKE
WASHOE COUNTY
FORT CHURCHILL HIST. STATE MON. (RUINS)
5
6
Incline Village
Dayton
CARSON CITY
3
LAKE TAHOE
Stewart
Carson River
PINE NUT MOUNTAINS
Wabuska
CARSON CITY COUNTY
DOUGLAS COUNTY
SINGATSE RANGE
Genoa
2
Valley
Walker River
Yerington
Weed Heights
Stateline
Minden
Gardnerville
South Lake Tahoe
DOUGLAS COUNTY
LYON COUNTY
Mason Valley
Carson
MT. SIEGEL
ACTUAL PONY EXPRESS ROUTE
ORIGINAL PONY EXPRESS STATIONS
2. GENOA
3. CARSON CITY
4. DAYTON
5. REEDS
6. FORT CHURCHILL
SCALE IN MILES

MINI-TRIP Sulphur Springs to Ruby Valley

The Pony Express in Nevada is part of your colorful heritage. The Bureau of Land Management invites you to explore your heritage by traveling part of the route. We think you'll enjoy the following mini-trip. The map opposite gives directions and site identification; the route is clearly marked on the ground with signs and wooden markers.

As you travel the route, imagine what it must have been like riding alone across hostile territory, braving the elements, and watching for Indians. The Pony Express in Nevada of 1860 was exciting, and with a little imagination, you, too, can capture some of that feeling.

Length of trip on the trail: 1 1/2 days

Distance: 39 miles

Transportation: four-wheel drive vehicle

Conditions: dirt and gravel roads

Route: Travel 20 miles north of Eureka on Highway 51. Turn northeast on a gravel road passing south of the Sulphur Springs Station site, and travel toward the Thompson Ranch, following the Pony Express markers. Travel north of the Thompson Ranch about a mile to Telegraph Canyon. On the west side of the road among the cottonwoods are the remains of the Diamond Springs Station. Travel up Telegraph Canyon through the Diamond Mountains (a four-wheel drive is necessary in the canyon). After coming over the mountain pass, follow the markers through the lower end of Huntington Valley, passing near the site of the Jacob's Well Station, and through Overland Pass in the Ruby Mountains. From there, follow the markers to the Ruby Valley Station.

(More detailed maps of the area described are available for a nominal fee at BLM offices throughout Nevada.)

Stations on the trip:

Sulphur Springs — Located on private land about two miles north of the Pony Express route, this station was built as a stop on the Overland Stage Line, but the Pony Express probably used it in its final months of operation. Near the spring are some old ruins that could be part of the Overland Stage station, but no one knows for sure.

Diamond Springs—The station site is on private land, about a mile north of Thompson Ranch. Some portions of the original Pony Express station are still partially visible among large cottonwoods at the mouth of Telegraph Canyon.

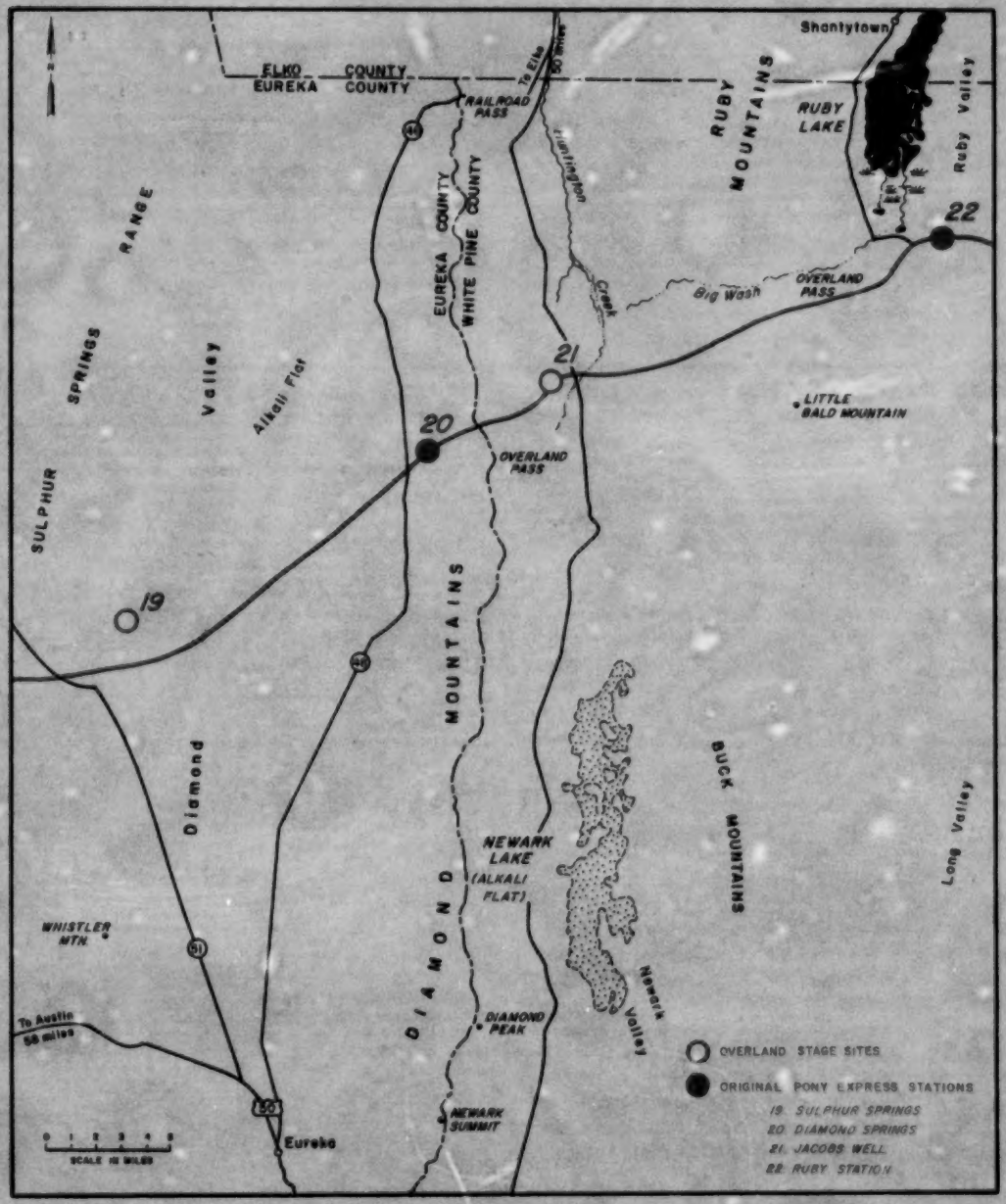
Jacob's Well — It was probably established as an Overland Stage station and was probably used by the Pony Express in its final months. Jacob's Well is on public land near the intersection of the Elko Hamilton Stage Line Road, about five miles east of the main road to Elko. Very little of the station remains, except scattered pieces of the stone foundations and a caved-in well.

Ruby Valley—Nothing is left of the original station at the privately-owned site in Ruby Valley. Remnants of the station have been restored and are on display at the Northern Nevada Museum in Elko.

Points of Interest:

Campgrounds—The BLM's Ruby Marsh Recreation Site is about 18 miles north of Ruby Valley Pony Express Station. It is well-developed, with 35 units, drinking water, and sanitation facilities.

Scenery—The Ruby Mountains and the Ruby Marshes, to the north, are noted for their scenic quality.


ELKO COUNTY
EUREKA COUNTY
RAILROAD PASS
To Elko 50 miles
Shantytown
RUBY MOUNTAINS
RUBY LAKE
Ruby Valley
22
Big Wash
OVERLAND PASS
EUREKA COUNTY
WHITE PINE COUNTY
Creek
RANGE
SPRINGS
Valley
Alkali Flat
21
20
LITTLE BALD MOUNTAIN
OVERLAND PASS
SULPHUR
19
DIAMOND MOUNTAINS
Diamond
NEWARK LAKE (ALKALI FLAT)
BUCK MOUNTAINS
Long Valley
WHISTLER MTN.
To Austin 58 miles
DIAMOND PEAK
Newark Valley
NEWARK SUMMIT
Eureka
SCALE IN MILES
OVERLAND STAGE SITES
ORIGINAL PONY EXPRESS STATIONS
19. SULPHUR SPRINGS
20. DIAMOND SPRINGS
21. JACOBS WELL
22. RUBY STATION

MINI-TRIP Ruby Valley to Egan Canyon

For your enjoyment, the Bureau of Land Management suggests the following mini-trip along the Pony Express route in Nevada. The map opposite gives directions and site identification. The route is clearly marked on the ground with signs and wooden posts.

As you travel the route, imagine what it must have been like riding alone across remote, hostile territory, braving the elements, and watching for Indians. Being a Pony Express rider in Nevada of 1860 was exciting, and with a little imagination, you, too, can capture some of that feeling.

Length of trip on the trail: 2 days

Distance: 43 miles

Transportation: pickup truck

Conditions: dirt roads

Route: Travel 37 miles south of Elko on State Route 46. Turn east on Harrison Pass Road and then south on Ruby Valley Road. Turn east at the Pony Express sign marking the route and follow the markers for 2.5 miles to the Ruby Valley Station site located in a fenced pasture. From there follow the marked route for 9 miles to Mountain Springs Station. Continue eastward on the marked route for 11 miles and slightly to the north will be Butte Station. Another 15 miles further on the trail is the Fort Pierce graveyard and Egan Station. From there follow the route through Egan Canyon across the west side of Steptoe Valley to Highway 93, then to the Egan Canyon Wayside, north of Ely. (More detailed maps of the area described are available for a nominal fee at BLM offices throughout Nevada.)

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Stations on the trip:

Ruby Valley—Nothing is left of the original station at the privately-owned site in Ruby Valley. Remnants of the station have been restored and are on display at the Northern Nevada Museum in Elko.

Mountain Springs—Nothing remains of this station either, established as an Overland Stage stop and used during the last months of the Pony Express. The site, on private land in the Maverick Springs Range, is marked by a modern structure.

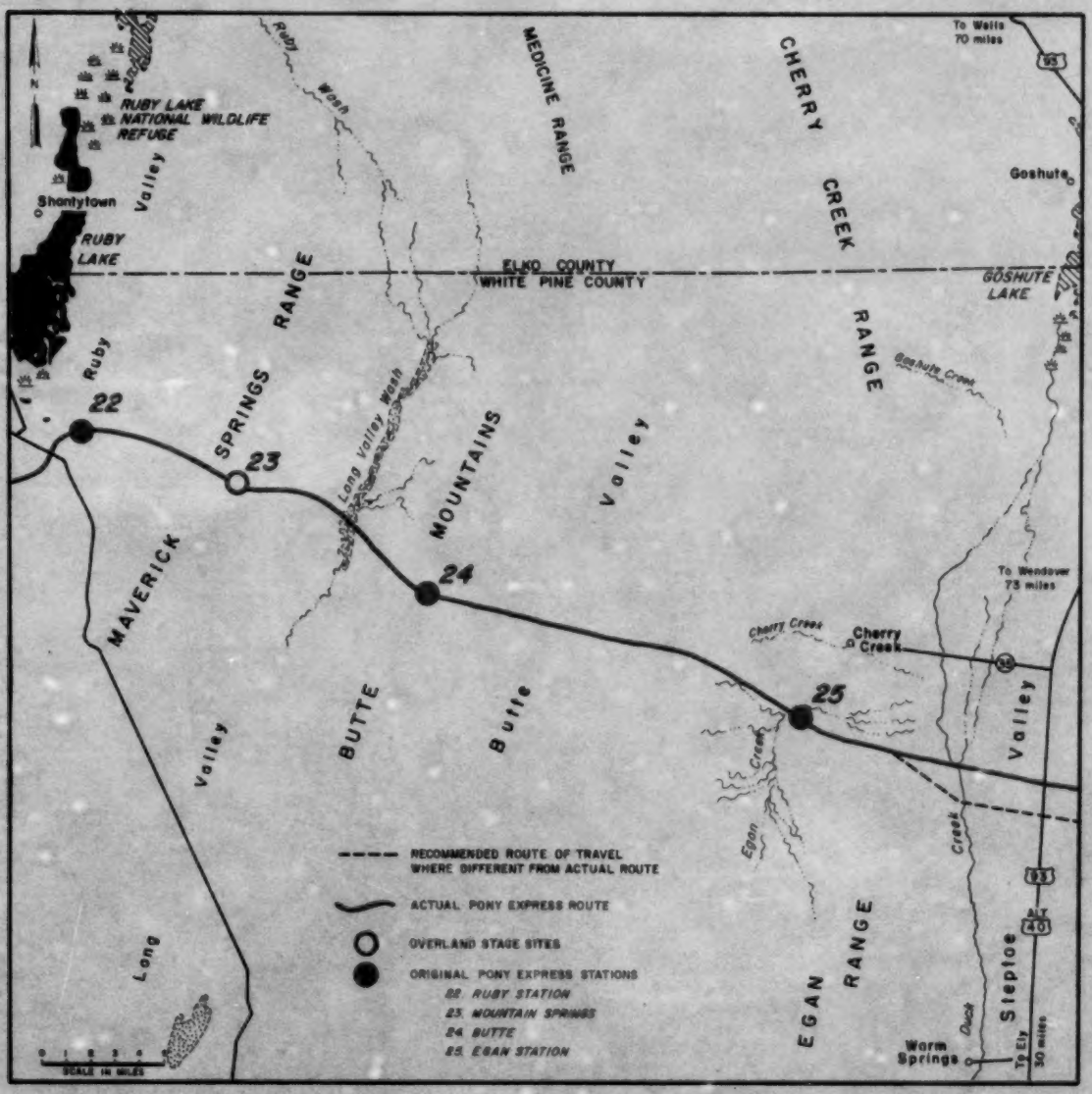
Butte—This site, on public land on the east side of the Butte Mountains, was an original Pony Express station and an Overland Stage stop. Stone foundations and portions of a stone fireplace are all that remain.

Egan—On the south side of the route, just before entering the west end of Egan Canyon, is the site of the Egan Station. Rock foundations, overgrown by sagebrush, can still be seen at the site inside the fenced private land. Egan Canyon was the site of several ambushes of the Pony Express riders by Indians.

Points of Interest:

Fort Pierce Graveyard—Located on the north side of the route, there are four graves marked at this site by wooden headboards. One of the graves possibly contains remains of a Pony Express rider killed in the line of duty.

Egan Canyon Wayside—Located on the east side of Highway 93, this interpretive display contains information about the Pony Express' colorful history and artists' conceptions of people, places, and events.


PONY EXPRESS
RUBY LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
Shantytown
RUBY LAKE
Ruby Valley
Ruby Wash
MEDICINE RANGE
CHERRY CREEK RANGE
To Wells 70 miles
95
Goshute
ELKO COUNTY
WHITE PINE COUNTY
GOSHUTE LAKE
Goshute Creek
RUBY MOUNTAINS
SPRINGS RANGE
Long Valley Wash
Valley
22
23
24
25
MAVERICK
Valley
BUTTE
Butte
Valley
To Wendover 73 miles
Cherry Creek
Cherry Creek
Egan Creek
Duck Creek
Valley
93
40
Ely
Sleploe
Worm Springs
To Ely 50 miles
EGAN RANGE
Long
RECOMMENDED ROUTE OF TRAVEL WHERE DIFFERENT FROM ACTUAL ROUTE
ACTUAL PONY EXPRESS ROUTE
OVERLAND STAGE SITES
ORIGINAL PONY EXPRESS STATIONS
22. RUBY STATION
23. MOUNTAIN SPRINGS
24. BUTTE
25. EGAN STATION
SCALE IN MILES

"The past belongs
to the future,
but only the present
can preserve it."

Anonymous

A historical reminder:

When exploring remnants of the past like the Pony Express stations, leave things exactly as you found them. Removing or destroying any historical artifacts, no matter how small, irreparably changes and damages the site, which, in the case of the Pony Express, has survived for more than a hundred years. Only you can insure its safety and survival by enjoying but not disturbing these invaluable pieces of the past.

Federal law protects these artifacts. Fines and prison sentences can be assessed for illegal removals.

NSO PUB. 6 Rev 1981

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.